

SALVADOR JUANPERE

# PARADIGMA ±



## ART FROM LUCIDITY

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Salvador Juanpere belongs to that fringe of artists with a vocation for lucidity who do not repudiate a theoretical framework in which to insert their own work. A theoretical framework that is inevitably provisional. Self-awareness without «excess awareness». The point is that art is also knowledge, although every work of art refers only to itself.

A vocation for lucidity is not equivalent to a justification of art. In Antiquity, this justification was not precise; nor is it today, when nothing is obvious. Gadamer writes that «when art no longer wished to be anything other than art, the great modern revolution began». That is so, but the process has not come to an end. The autonomy of the aesthetic (Kant) led to the «death of art» in Hegel. Today we know that art is not dead. It is just that a new origin-directed impulse is emerging: to reincorporate art in life, that is, in the origin, without abdicating its essentially enigmatic and innovative nature.

It has been pointed out that there is something monstrous in so-called Art with a capital A, which is a strictly modern, Western phenomenon. Not so long ago, let's say five hundred years, there were no museums or galleries or concert halls, nor a special class of people called artists. What today we call art was inseparable from everyday life and more immediate. In this context, the avant-gardes and the emancipation of art have signified at one and the same time a great breakthrough and a great loss. On the one hand, a fertile wave of freedom is emerging; on the other, no-one no longer knows what they are dealing with.

Personally, I have often referred to the «unreality syndrome» that characterises our age and to the function of art as the recovery of that lost reality. Or also: the recovery of the original non-duality. Modernity definitively transcended the old Aristotelian scheme of art as the imitation (*mimesis*) of nature. Art is creation in which, in effect, there comes about the miracle of transcending dualities: between nature and copy, between form and



content, between means and end. The Romantics saw this: in a general way, art has to do with the transcendence of the duality of subject/object.

There is nothing irrational about the miracle of this transcendence, but it is much more than rational and obeys the essence of creation in freedom. No reductionism is possible here. George Steiner showed himself to be justly implacable with doctrines like psychoanalysis, structuralism or deconstructionist theory that purport to give a scientific explanation of the work of art. The miracle exists and somehow reality is recovered. The festive is reinvented. *Something* is noticed. A foundational paradox: art has to do with the world to the extent that the world is inexplicable. Art has to do with the self to the extent that the self is unending.

Another paradox: art as a symbolic response in order to transcend the symbolic. Art as an impossible mission that seeks to break the vicious circle of a culture made of symbols which refer only to other symbols. So there is nothing strange about the fact that with the agony of modernity a certain destruction of «the artistic thing» should come about for the sake of the act, the ceremony, the event, the gesture. Reinventing the festive, yes indeed, but with a common characteristic, in part the legacy of surrealism: the blotting out of the boundaries between art and life.

Life, art: today both demand extra creativity that was not formerly indispensable. Creativity to adapt to an increasingly complex environment. Creativity that implies unplanned responses to unforeseen stimuli and disturbances. With a very special accepting of chance. Salvador Juanpere himself has on occasion referred to a future universe colonised by our creativity.

Life as art, art as life. Lucidity as the awareness of paradox. To lose all will to make art and thus enter the state of grace that makes art possible. The sculptor Brancusi put it like this: «*Ce qui est difficile ce n'est pas de faire, mais de se mettre dans l'état de faire.*» Creation in freedom then concurs with the Taoist *wu-wei* teaching, in which one acts without pursuing any predetermined goal. I have suggested giving the name of *exploring* to this action which

transcends the old principle of purpose. The creative individual acts not in pursuit of a goal, but rather to find out what is the goal to pursue. Exploring is thus a revealing and an *aletheia*, a therapy without dogma. And for this reason, at heart the creative individual never knows what he/she wants.

Salvador Juanpere is an artist who is abreast of the latest paradigmatic shifts in science and philosophy. He is wont to quote Koestler and David Bohm, Priogene, Mandelbrot, Einstein, Schrödinger. He acknowledges a debt to my own work, which is immensely gratifying to me. Some of us think that beneath any adventure in present-day art and science there must beat a shall we say «mystical» impulse: which Juanpere himself has called a «flight to the Origin» as a counterpart to the abyss of uncertainty. To put it another way: the recovery, through the very sophistication of languages, of the original non-duality. This is the essence of what I call the retroprogressive mode, where growing complexity and the approach to the origin are two sides of the same process.

Complexity, uncertainty, pluralism. All creators today are searching for their own language, and if «schools» divide and subdivide to infinity, it is because art returns to life, and life always overflows beyond us. However, this very overflowing life is the common ground that allows us to, let's say, «wink» at each other from the fragmentation of languages.

I invite the work of Salvador Juanpere to be viewed in this context at once lucid and exploratory. Today the artist knows that the times of simplification, naivety or reductionism have ended. No totalitarian synthesis of the world is possible. The world is essentially complex, unpredictable, ambiguous, chaotic even. We belong to the age of uncertainty where it is advisable to develop a taste for the difficult, release extra creativity, explore chance, accept paradoxes, look out on the open air of lucidity.

What is at stake is art as creation and art as experience. Because the time has come to acknowledge it: hardly ever do we have experiences; only sensations hanging from doctrines. Art from lucidity is an invitation to penetrate the «forbidden territory of the unnameable».

